

## Service Area Strategic Plan

### Department of Social Services (765)

#### Service Area 22 of 33

#### **Foster Care Payments and Supportive Services (765 469 01)**

##### **Description**

The Foster Care Program includes three service components united under one program umbrella: Foster Care Prevention and Family Preservation and Support Services; Foster Care Services; and Independent Living Services.

The focus of Foster Care Prevention, Preservation and Support Services is to provide services and interventions to maintain and strengthen the family unit while ensuring the safety of the child. Foster Care Prevention cases are those in which intervention is needed to prevent out-of-home and/or out-of-community placement of a child. Family preservation and Support Services are flexible locality-coordinated community-based programs that provide services to help children and families that are in crisis who need short-term support. Services may include "hard services" such as counseling and in-home services or "soft services" such as child care and material assistance. Services can be to reunify a child in foster care with the natural parent. Adoption promotion and family preservation services can also be provided.

Foster Care services provide temporary living solutions for children who must be removed from their birth or adoptive parents or other legal caretakers because of abuse and/or neglect. Foster care is also a vehicle through which services to children who have not been abused or neglected but require placement outside their birth/adoptive home due to chronic mental health problems, delinquency or the caretaker's inability to provide for the child's needs are provided. Foster care's mandate is to find a permanent home for a child in as timely a manner as possible. Permanent placements include: return to parent or previous legal custodian; placement with relatives with subsequent transfer of custody; adoption; permanent foster care; independent living or another planned permanent living arrangement. Foster care placement and services are available in each of the 120 local departments of social services.

Through the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), known more commonly as the Independent Living Program, VDSS and local departments design and implement programs that identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and provide services to help these children make successful transitions to self-sufficiency. Services include, but are not limited to, high school assistance, post-secondary/vocational assistance, life skills training, health education, career exploration and planning, job readiness training, housing assistance, and mentoring. In addition, young people who leave foster care after they turn 18 years old but have not attained age 21 can receive aftercare services, including counseling, employment, education and room and board. As required by CFCIP, youth must participate directly in developing their program activities and accept personal responsibility for achieving independence.

##### **Background Information**

##### **Mission Alignment and Authority**

- *Describe how this service supports the agency mission*

The Foster Care Program supports the Virginia Department of Social Services' mission through helping children, both within their own homes and those who are removed from their homes due to abuse and/or neglect, develop strong futures through the provision of services to strengthen the family; find permanent homes in which the child may grow up; and provide services to aid in the transition into adulthood as productive citizens of their community and the Commonwealth.

- *Describe the Statutory Authority of this Service*

Title IV-B of the Social Security Act requires federal expenditures for State public child welfare agencies in establishing, extending and strengthening child welfare services. These funds support family preservation services, reunification services and safe and stable family services.

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act provides funding to enable the state to provide foster care and transitional independent living programs for children, adoption assistance for children with special needs.

The federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and Section 477 of the Title IV-E of the Social Security Act established the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and replaced the former Independent Living Initiative (established in 1986). The CFCIP increased funding for independent living activities; offers increased assistance for young people ages 18-21 who are leaving care; emphasizes the importance of securing permanent families for young people in foster care; gives states the option to extend Medicaid to young people transitioning from foster care; and increases state accountability for outcomes for young people transitioning out of care.

The Code of Virginia provides statutory authority for the provision of all Foster Care Program activities through the following Titles, Chapters and Section: Title 63.2, Chapters 1, 2 and 3 - General provisions, State Social Services and Local Boards of Social Services; §63.2-410 - State pool of funds under the Comprehensive Services Act ; 63.2 Chapter 9 - Foster Care; Title 63.2 Chapter 11 - Implementation of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; 63.2-1509 - Failure to report; Title 16.1 §§16.1-251; 16.1-252, 16.1-277.01, 16.1-277.02, 16.1-278.2, 16.2-278.3, 16.1-278.4, 16.1-281, 16.1-282, 16.1-282.1, 16.1-283; Title 22.1 §22.1-287.D.3 - Limitation on access to records.

## Customers

Agency Customer Group	Customer	Customers served annually	Potential annual customers
Community and Volunteer Organizations (potential unlimited)	AmeriCorps Program	3	3
Individuals, Children and Families (served unknown; potential unlimited)	Children and Families ( potential unlimited)	23,801	0
Community and Volunteer Organizations (potential unlimited)	Faith-based Organizations (served unknown; potential unlimited)	0	0
Governmental Entities (served unknown; potential unlimited)	Federal Agencies (potential unlimited)	1	1
General Public (served unknown; potential unlimited)	General Public (potential unlimited)	4,025	0
Governmental Entities (served unknown; potential unlimited)	Local Departments of Social Services	120	120
Businesses (served unknown; potential unlimited)	Media (potential unlimited)	50	0

## Foster Care Payments and Supportive Services

Individuals, Children and Families (served unknown; potential unlimited)	Non-custodial Parents ( potential unlimited)	25	0
Governmental Entities (served unknown; potential unlimited)	Policy Makers (served unknown; potential unlimited)	0	0
Businesses (served unknown; potential unlimited)	Providers (potential unlimited)	150	0
Community and Volunteer Organizations (potential unlimited)	Virginia Youth Advisory Council (potential unlimited)	50	0
Individuals, Children and Families (served unknown; potential unlimited)	Vulnerable Adults (potential unlimited)	300	0

### *Anticipated Changes To Agency Customer Base*

The numbers of children entering foster care are anticipated to increase given current trends. Families receiving services (including vulnerable adults) and the number of faith-based organizations being provided with products and services through foster care are anticipated to increase with more comprehensive data gathering.

## Partners

Partner	Description
AmeriCorps Program	
Community Action Agencies	
Local Departments of Social Services	
Norfolk State University	
Private Child Placing Agencies and Faith-based groups	
State Agencies	
Virginia Community College System	
Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities (VISSTA)	
Virginia Intercommunity Transition Council	
Virginia Tech	
Volunteer Organizations	

## Products and Services

- *Factors Impacting the Products and/or Services:*

The factors impacting products and services for older youth include the lack of adequate funding and resources for providing independent living services and the lack of community support and involvement with these young people. Given the nationwide trend of increased numbers of youth over age 13 entering the foster care system and exiting to independent living situations, these services are critical components of helping older foster car youth successfully transition to adulthood .

Funding for prevention and in-home services to prevent foster care placement is inadequate, resulting in children entering the foster care system solely to receive needed mental health and physical health treatment. Virginia law does not mandate that prevention services be provided in order to prevent the possibility of foster care placement. Foster care placement is more expensive than in-home prevention services. The lack of adequate funding for prevention services therefore places a greater financial burden on the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Another factor impacting the foster care program is the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2006 and three major changes to allowable charges and funding. First, the DRA (P.L. 109-171), reduces allowable Medicaid costs for children in foster care. These services must now be covered by other funding sources. Second, states are required to use federal Title IV-E dollars rather than Medicaid funds when a foster care/adoption activity is covered by both sources. Lastly, the DRA narrows the eligibility requirements for children placed in foster care thus reducing the numbers of children eligible for Title IV-E funding. Together, these DRA changes may serve to increase the amount of state funding needed to support basic foster care activities.

- *Anticipated Changes to the Products and/or Services*

The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288) requires that by 2011, 90% of all children in foster care must be visited by their case worker on a monthly basis, with at least half of these visits occurring in the child's place of residence or placement. Beginning in 2008, documentation for annual percentage increases towards the federal goal must be set and met annually or Virginia may face fiscal penalties. To support this initiative, the federal government has allocated \$688,603 to Virginia. A state match of \$229,534 is required to draw down these federal funds.

Increases in funding for foster care board rates and the Independent Living program are expected to improve permanency and supportive services for foster care children in Virginia. Efforts to provide more support to foster children and their caretakers include Virginia foster care board rate increases of 14% in 2007. For the first time since federal Independent Living funds became available, VDSS is positioned to access its entire allocation for Independent Living Services and post-secondary educational and vocational training for older youth in foster care. Because Virginia provided the entire state match required to draw down the total allocation of more than \$2 million, Virginia is unlikely to experience any negative impact of increased federal monitoring of states' use of these allocations. It is expected that federal allocations will be reduced for states that do not fully use these funds.

Other anticipated changes in the next biennium include expanding the Virginia Youth Advisory Council by creating Regional Councils of foster and adoptive youth; statewide training on "Finding Families," a Casey Program used nationwide to locate permanent connections for older youth in care and "Family Group Decision-Making," a best-practice supporting the involvement of families in meeting the needs of youth in foster care. All of these efforts are consistent with the First Lady of Virginia's "For Keeps" initiative, an approach to identify and develop ways to find and strengthen permanent families for older children who are in foster care, or who might be at risk for coming into foster care.

- *Listing of Products and/or Services*
  - Support of organizations serving communities
  - Recruitment of volunteers and training on management of volunteers
  - Services to promote family stability
  - Services to protect vulnerable adults
  - Economic assistance to low-income families/individuals or nutrition, child care, health care eligibility, and financial assistance to low-income families/individuals
  - Financial support for children
  - Services that promote sufficiency
  - Services to protect children
  - Services to ensure that children have permanent homes
  - Support Services (e.g., HR, IS)
  - Independent Living training for Local Departments of Social Services staff
  - Training professionals in kinship care
  - Training kinship care providers

## Finance

- *Financial Overview*

Funding for the Foster Care program comes from general funds and federal funds. The federal funds come from various sources, including Title IV-E Foster Care, Title IV-B Part II (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Chafee Independent Living and Education and Training Vouchers, and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).

- *Financial Breakdown*

	Fiscal Year 2009		Fiscal Year 2010	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Base Budget	\$38,806,368	\$44,512,492	\$38,806,368	\$44,512,492
Change To Base	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Service Area Total	\$38,806,368	\$44,512,492	\$38,806,368	\$44,512,492
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### Service Area Objectives

- Promote safe and stable living situations for children and families

#### Objective Measures

- Percent of children who return home within twelve months of entering foster care

Governor's Key:

No

Measure Type:

Outcome

Measure Frequency:

Annual

Frequency Comment: % of FC children who return home within 12 months

Measure Baseline: 69% of foster care children returned home within twelve months in SFY 2005

Measure Target: 71% of foster care children will return home within twelve months by the end of SFY 2010.

Data Source and Calculation: OASIS data

- Percent of children in foster care who have no more than two placements within the first 12 months of entering care

Governor's Key:

No

Measure Type:

Outcome

Measure Frequency:

Annual

Frequency Comment: % of children in FC who have no more than 2 placements within 12 months

Measure Baseline: 85.51% of children in foster care had no more than 2 placements within the first 12 months of entering care in SFY 2005.

Measure Target: 86.7% of children in foster care will have no more than 2 placements within the first 12 months of entering care in SFY 2010.

Data Source and Calculation: OASIS data